



I

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Louisiana: **Vision 2020** is a challenge to create a better, more competitive Louisiana and a guide to economic renewal and diversification. It is a platform for innovative initiatives. It is a process by which our progress toward our long-term goals will continue to be promoted and monitored.


Louisiana: **Vision 2020** is a living strategic plan. This long-term plan has provided a unified vision and a common direction for Louisiana's economic development efforts. Louisiana's citizens, businesses, agencies, and other groups called for and continue to seek a unified, coherent process for improving the state. **Vision 2020** provides a roadmap for such improvement. **Vision 2020** is particularly important for Louisiana because of our history, our political past, and the need to position the state to prosper amid national and global markets.

The Louisiana Economic Development Council is required by law to update the state's master plan for economic development every five years to ensure that it remains aligned with the needs of the state and the desires of our citizens. To ensure that it remains a living document, the Council has chosen to house the **Vision 2020** benchmarks on the Web (<http://vision2020.louisiana.gov/>) instead of publishing them in print. This will allow the benchmarks to be updated annually as new data become available.



Vision 2020
is particularly
important for
Louisiana
because of our
history, our
political past,
and the need to
position the state to
prosper amid
national and
global markets.

This **Louisiana: Vision 2020, 2003 Update** is the result of numerous Council and task force meetings, Cabinet and state agency input, regional public meetings, written comments, and email suggestions. Since the creation of the Economic Development Council in 1996, over 130 meetings and hearings have been held, recommending more than a hundred policies and actions designed to help us reach our goals.

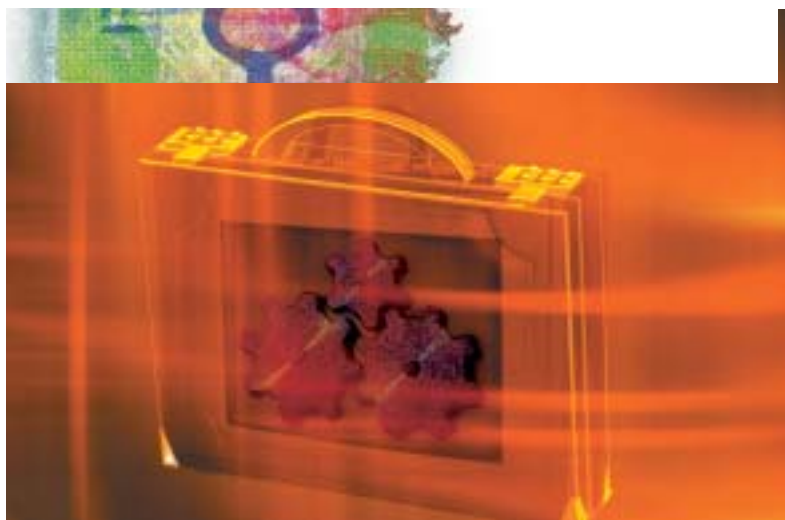


The **plan** is built around
a vision of Louisiana as a **top
ten state** in which to live,
work, visit and do business.

The result of all this attention is a demanding, visionary document. The plan is built around a vision of Louisiana in the year 2020 as a place with a vibrant, balanced economy; a fully engaged, well-educated workforce; and a quality of life that places it among the top ten states in the nation in which to live, work, visit and do business.

Louisiana: Vision 2020 is grounded in reality and embodies a full awareness of our historical shortcomings. It requires that we alter our behavior radically to be fully competitive in a global economy. It demands that we create new quality jobs in high growth sectors. It calls for a philosophy of making investments in our future and of making those responsible for the investments accountable for their performance.

Louisiana: Vision 2020 recognizes that too many of our citizens live in poverty, and that this lowers the quality of life in Louisiana for everyone. The potential vital contributions of these citizens remains trapped, creating a financial burden for the state, rather than a positive contribution to their families' incomes and the state's economy. Louisiana must seek creative ways to move these citizens out of poverty and into the workforce as fully engaged participants in our economy.



Many of those living in poverty in Louisiana also live in rural regions of the state. One of the most complicated problems facing our citizens will be addressing economic growth in these rural areas.

In pursuit of **Louisiana: Vision 2020**, three goals are used as the plan's primary architectural elements. **Goal One**, the one that makes the other two goals possible, is to re-create our state as a Learning Enterprise, a rich, diverse, complex organism in which all businesses, institutions, and citizens are actively engaged in the pursuit of knowledge. Louisiana will be a place where every citizen has the opportunity and responsibility to continue learning throughout his or her lifetime.





Louisiana: Vision 2020 demands that every citizen, business, and institution take direct responsibility for the acquisition and utilization of knowledge. As employees learn new skills and gain new experiences, they are better able to take on new responsibilities, which lead to promotions and higher wages. In this way, lifelong learning becomes directly linked to upward mobility and economic development.

Vision 2020 **requires that we** **change** *the way we think about ourselves,* **our capabilities and** **our state,** *and the way we behave.*

This **Louisiana: Vision 2020, 2003 Update** places new emphasis on the importance of early childhood education and teacher quality as keys to increasing student achievement and breaking the cycle of poverty. It calls for improved math and reading performance in high school and the elimination of functional illiteracy. It demands a workforce with the knowledge and skills to compete globally, and increases the emphasis on workforce training focused on

the needs of industry. It looks forward to education and workforce training systems that operate seamlessly to support lifelong learning for all residents of Louisiana.

Building on this raised educational platform, Goal Two calls for an economy that is driven by a diverse and thriving set of technology-intensive industries.

It positions our colleges and universities to be important sources of well-educated employees, sources of expertise for problem solving, and sources of technology for commercialization.

Goal Two envisions a balanced approach to economic development, encompassing business retention, targeted attraction, and business creation and growth. It includes a focus on the importance of



THE TERM “TECHNOLOGY” AS USED THROUGHOUT THIS PLAN IS DEFINED SIMPLY AS “A USEFUL THING,” A DEFINITION THAT INCLUDES THE INTANGIBLE, SO THAT A PROCESS, FOR EXAMPLE, IS AS MUCH A TECHNOLOGY AS IS A DEVICE. NO DISTINCTION IS MADE FOR “HIGH TECHNOLOGY.”

creating an environment in which entrepreneurs will thrive, since entrepreneurs create most of today’s high growth companies and new high wage jobs. It stresses that our economic development strategies must continue to shift to a broader focus on the retention and creation of high quality jobs — jobs that will increase incomes and wealth and keep more of our talented graduates and workers in the state.

It foresees a Louisiana with a tax structure, legal and regulatory climate, transportation infrastructure, and information infrastructure all working together to create a fertile, dynamic environment for profitable and competitive businesses.

It recognizes the importance of the state's existing industries, while at the same time actively seeking diversification into emerging technology areas where high growth is expected in the coming years. Independent research identified fifteen technology-driven clusters—eight existing industry clusters and seven emerging clusters—as targets for Louisiana's economic development efforts. As was called for in the original **Vision 2020**, Louisiana Economic Development (LED) has undergone an organizational transformation to focus on these clusters. The clusters are also the targets of state research and development investments.

Vision 2020 is Louisiana's call to embrace the challenges and opportunities of the 21st Century. **Goal Three** raises the bar so that a mediocre quality of life is not an alternative for Louisiana. It says that by the year 2020 Louisiana will rank among the top ten states in the nation in standard of living indicators. It calls for increased personal income, for the elimination of poverty, and for quality health care for all Louisiana citizens. It demands that we provide safe homes, schools, and streets for all of our citizens and that we pay special attention to the needs of our children.

This **2003 Update** also recognizes that Louisiana must focus on our communities to rebuild the social and economic relationships that create a sense of trust and widespread communication. This social capital helps to create the foundation for developing and strengthening resources that make our communities desirable places for knowledge economy companies to do business and their employees to live.



We must
promote a
positive state
image, portraying
Louisiana as
modernizing,
forward-thinking,
progressive,
and
moving in
the right
direction—
because we are.

Goal Three calls for the preservation, development and promotion of Louisiana's natural and cultural assets for their recreational and aesthetic values. It takes economic advantage of this heritage with a call for statewide expansion of the tourism industry. By implementing the reforms driven by **Vision 2020**, we will continue to make measurable progress in the most important quality of life indicators.

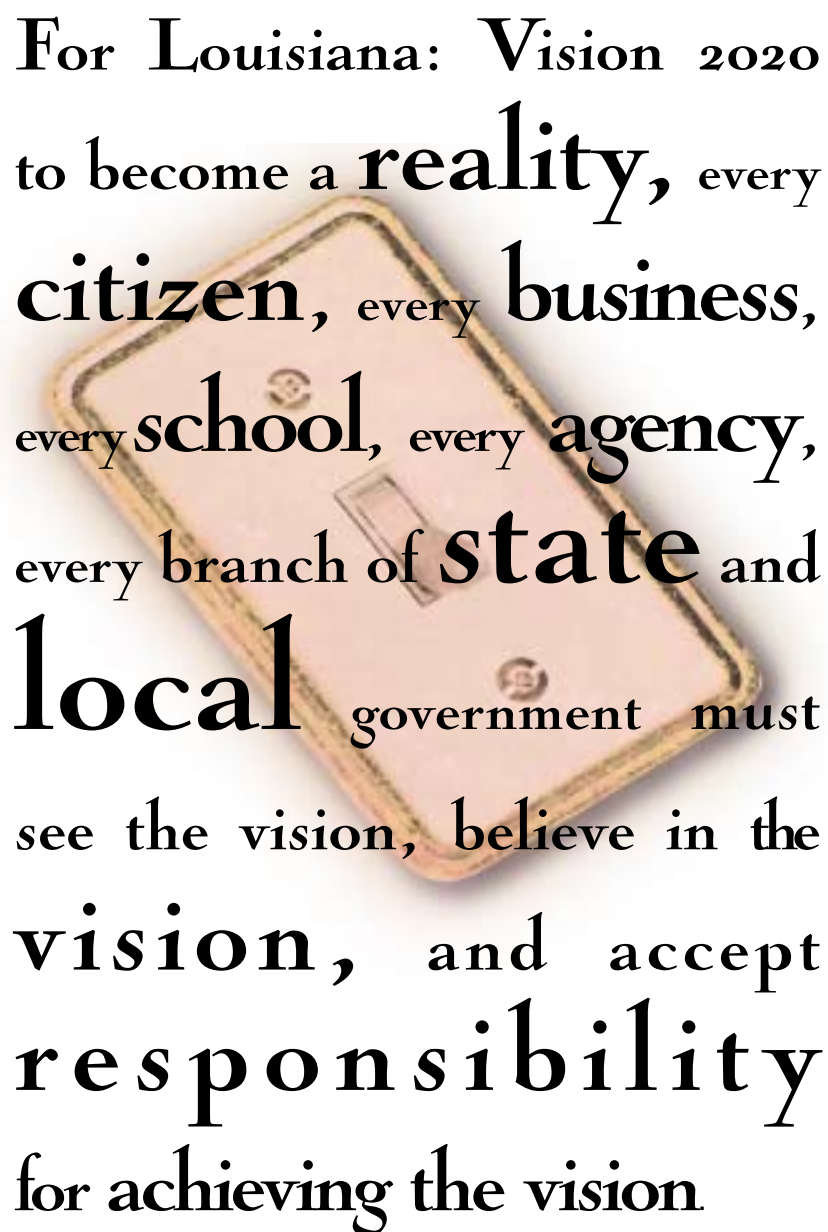
We must promote a positive state image, portraying Louisiana as modernizing, forward-thinking, progressive, and moving in the right direction—because we are.

The first five years of **Vision 2020's** implementation show significant progress against our benchmarks.

We are not done—but if we stick with our goals over the long-run, we can reach them. While we must continue to understand and address our shortcomings,

Louisiana: Vision 2020 is a challenge to every citizen to take note of the progress we have made and to draw from it the courage to step forward.

Finally, **Louisiana: Vision 2020** is a bold challenge demanding involvement and commitment. It serves as a catalyst for action, as a framework and guide for building a better and more competitive Louisiana. The Louisiana Economic Development Council will continue to use the plan's goals and objectives as the basis for policy initiatives and the benchmarks to monitor progress towards achieving the lofty goals.



For Louisiana: Vision 2020
to become a **reality**, every
citizen, every **business**,
every **school**, every **agency**,
every branch of **state** and
local government must
see the vision, believe in the
vision, and accept
responsibility
for achieving the vision